



Arizona Game and Fish Department Wildlife Matters

May 2006

Volume IV,
Issue 5

47th 2nd Regular Session



Agency Liaisons

Legislative Liaison

Tony Guiles:

602-789-3280

aguiles@azgfd.gov

Ast. Legislative Liaison

Ben Alteneder:

602-789-3533

balteneder@azgfd.gov

Free Trailmap



Wildlife Feeding Bill/Poaching Bill sent to Governor

House Bill 2129 heads to the Governor's desk after passing the House (43-8). The feeding of wildlife has become a problem in many metro areas around the state. It starts with individuals feeding the rabbits and pretty soon javelina and mountain lions show up for dinner as well. Sen. Toni Hellon (R-Tucson) has been instrumental in getting the bill through the process and realizes the need for such a measure. Joe Yarchin a biologist with the Department says, "Having a law provides us the opportunity to give people the biological reasons not to feed and, in closing, tell them it's illegal. We feel the general public is not into blatantly breaking the law." The main portion of the bill sponsored by Rep. Jerry Weiers also includes provisions that raise the penalties for repeat offenders who violate game laws.

Free, New Trailmap Will help you find Wildlife in the White Mountains

PINETOP, Ariz. - With the weather getting warmer and kids getting out of school soon, maybe it's a good time to plan a family vacation to enjoy wildlife viewing in the White Mountains. The Arizona Game and Fish Department has a new field guide called "White Mountains Wildlife Trails" to help you map out a fun trip to enjoy nature in eastern Arizona. The department is offering everyone a copy of the free, new guide, which comes complete with a map and descriptions of several prime areas where you can see a variety of animals.

"The guide will help people to streamline wildlife-viewing trips in the Pinetop, Springerville and Alpine areas," says Bruce Sitko, Public Information Officer at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Pinetop office. "Families and friends will be able to plan out what types of wildlife they want to see, which areas they want to visit, and how to most quickly and effectively get from one area to another."

The guide gives directions to local wildlife-viewing spots and information about how to best navigate through them. Some sites have hiking trails, while others are driving loops of longer mileage. The guide also tells you what types of facilities, such as restrooms, campsites, picnic areas and parking, are available at each location. In addition, the guide offers a



Big Game Hunt Changes



comprehensive description of what types of animals you're likely to find in each spot, from elk or Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep to hawks, wild turkeys and songbirds.

We want to make wildlife viewing as enjoyable as possible," says Sitko. "Making the planning easier and faster will help people get out the door more quickly, so they can make the most of their wildlife-viewing time."

The new guide is now available for free at all seven Arizona Game and Fish Department offices, located in Pinetop, Flagstaff, Kingman, Mesa, Phoenix, Tucson and Yuma. Office addresses and contact phone numbers can be found at the department's Web site azgfd.gov. Click on "Inside AZGFD" and then "Agency Directory." You can also call (928) 367-4281 for more information about the trail guide.

The new guide is paid for by the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Fund, which is lottery ticket sale money used for conservation purposes, including educating our children about wildlife, protecting endangered species and creating more opportunities for outdoor recreation. The new trail guide includes tips for responsible wildlife viewing.

Lots of Changes This Year to Big Game Hunting Seasons

PHOENIX - Hunters will want to get copies of this year's hunt regulations when they are available online and via hunting license sales dealers: There are lots of changes this year to the big game hunt seasons, in large part to assist efforts to retain and recruit hunters.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission on April 22 set the commission orders for deer, elk, pronghorn, turkey, javelina, bighorn sheep, buffalo, bear, and mountain lion, along with the small game hunting seasons, predator/furbearer seasons, and trapping seasons.

The newly adopted hunt regulations will be available online at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Web site at azgfd.gov by the first week of May. The printed regulations should be available at license dealers throughout the state by mid-May. The fall hunt application deadline is 7 p.m. (MST) June 13. Hunters can again apply online for the big game hunts this year at azgfd.gov.

Here is a quick summary of changes this year:

- The online application process is again available this year.
- There are fall javelina big game hunt permit tags available this year.
- Bonus points and loyalty points now also apply to javelina, turkey



and bear.

- A 10-percent non-resident cap now applies to bighorn sheep, buffalo, all antlered deer, bull elk, javelina, antelope and turkey. There is no longer a 15-percent bighorn sheep set-aside of hunt permit-tags for non-residents.
- The \$5 application fee per applicant will no longer be refunded on rejected applications.
- Applicants must be 10 years old by deadline day (June 13) to apply for bonus points. However, if applying for a hunt, applicants must be 10 years old by the beginning date of any hunt they select.
- Hunters are required to physically check-in for bear and mountain lion kills.
- Archery deer hunters are still required to report their harvest; compliance for this requirement last year was low.
- The 20-percent bonus point pass, meaning that 20-percent of tags in each hunt will be set aside for applicants with the highest number of bonus points, now applies to bighorn sheep, buffalo, antelope, bear, deer, elk, javelina and turkey.
- Metro unit numbers and boundaries have changed. Units 4A and 5A also changed.

Game Branch Chief Leonard Ordway said the department conducted an exhaustive effort to come up with strategies and efforts to increase hunter retention and recruitment, including maximizing hunting opportunities where feasible. Those recommendations resulted in a lot of small structure modifications this year, and even some significant changes, such as establishing some limited fall hunting for javelina.



Other proposed changes, such as having an earlier draw for elk and pronghorn antelope, will be implemented next year (some require rule changes before being implemented).

Saturday's commission meeting wasn't the only time public input has been gathered during the hunt-regulation process. During January and February, the Arizona Game and Fish Department conducted 11 public meetings throughout the state that were attended by approximately 600 people. The department also received approximately 350 written comments, mostly via e-mail.

"Because of all the proposed changes this year, we received what may be a record amount of public comment, which shows we have a robust process in place," Ordway said.

One area of ongoing concern, Ordway said, is the lack of reporting this past year by archery deer hunters. He explained that as of last year, successful archery deer hunters were required to contact the Game and Fish Department by person or via phone within 10 days of harvesting a

May Events



deer. Unfortunately, department analysis indicates that only 25 to 30 percent of the successful archers complied with the new requirement last year.

The archery report-in process was put in place to gather data on archery harvest rather than going to a full draw system for archery.

Ordway noted that both mountain lion and bear hunters have mandatory check-ins within 48 hours of harvesting an animal. "The mountain lion check-in requirement is new this year," he said.

A piece of good news, Ordway said, comes from the small game arena: the Gambel's and scaled quail harvest was almost 1.5 million birds this past season, which is the best quail harvest since the early 1980s.

May Dates and Events

[May Events at azgfd.gov](http://azgfd.gov)

Additional events for this month will be added as they become available. Please check back or submit your event from the link above

For additional information about *Wildlife Matters* Legislative Publication contact:

Ben Alteneder, Assistant Legislative Liaison

Arizona Game and Fish Department

602-789-3533

balteneder@azgfd.gov

Department Staff have contributed to this publication in the form of articles and photographs.

May 2, 2006